Nixon's Demeanor During Paris Visit Draws Sharp Criticism From French

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PARIS, April 8—President Nixon's talks with world leaders and his activities on the streets of Paris this weekend brought sharp criticism in France today, as well as some grudging acknowledgment of continuing United States power.

On three occasions on Saturday and Sunday, Mr. Nixon plunged through police lines to shake hands and talk with curbside crowds. This was in addition to talks with foreign leaders assembled here to honor the memory of President Georges Pompidou, who died on Tuesday.

A letter circulated to journalists and made available today to the bureau of The New York Times by a high official of a French ministry said Mr. Nixon had "shamelessly substituted a publicity campaign for the mourning of an entire nation, introducing an atmosphere of loud feverishness, the discourtesy of which is equaled only by its clumsiness."

Le Monde, the most respected newspaper in France, joined in the indignation in a front-page editorial titled "The Nixon Festival." But it added that the American President had spectacularly demonstrated his continuing ability to dominate international politics — even without the presence of Secretary of State Kissinger.

The newspaper said Mr. Nixon had asked for and received the allegiance of the European statesmen he saw one after the other and that he had continued the "superpower dialogue" with President Nikolai N. Podgorny of the Soviet Union.

The mass-circulation daily

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Nixon's Activities on Visit Are Criticized in France

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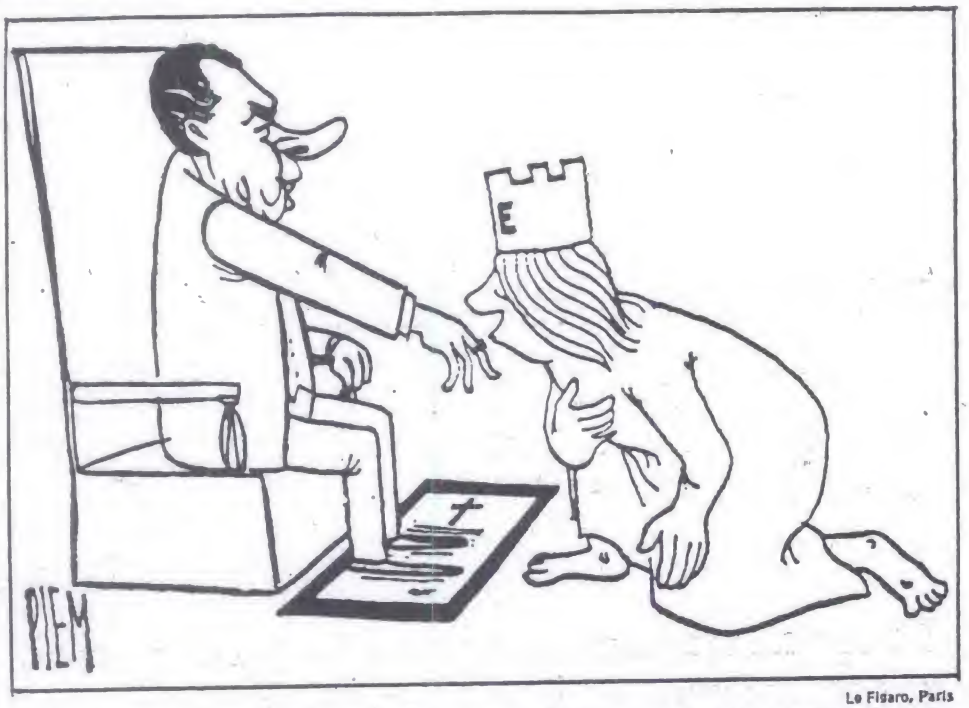
France-Soir said Mr. Nixon had set up a virtual White House at the residence of his host, Ambassador John N. Irwin 2d. France-Soir said the President had hammered away at the need for Atlantic cooperation and close consultation between the United States and Europe. He was in fact countering France's policy "in our very own capital," the paper said.

And the conservative Le Figaro squarely titled its account of the President's doings: "The Sovereign of the Western World."

Le Figaro's article spoke of Mr. Nixon's "operation Charlemagne" in which—just as a sovereign would—he accorded audiences to Italian, British, West Germany and Danish statesmen, all worried about deteriorating relations between the European community and the United States.

A cartoon next to the article makes clear how Le Figaro sees the power relationship between Mr. Nixon and Europe. A crowned woman depicting Europe kneels before Mr. Nixon, seated in a throne-like chair. She is about to kis a ring on the extended hand of the President. His feet are on a black-bordered death notice.

The French man-in-the-street was not at all puzzled that Mr. Nixon and other world leaders were conducting "mini-summits," as they were called here, after the memorial service for Mr. Pompidou on Saturday. More than 50 chiefs of state and government had converged on Paris to pay homage to President Pompidou.



Le Figaro, Paris

This cartoon accompanied an article in Le Figaro entitled, "The Sovereign of the Western World," about President Nixon's activities in Paris.

It seemed natural to the French that the leaders thus assembled would also do a little business with each other. Mr. Nixon spoke with nearly 40 of them during his 40 minutes at a reception at the Foreign Ministry and conducted more extensive talks elsewhere.

The universal bafflement was about why a foreign president would seek to press the flesh and speak with the crowds of several hundred gathered to watch the celebrities streaming in and out of buildings on the Rue du Faubourg-St.-Honoré.

One block of the south side of that street contains not only the residence of the American Ambassador, but the embassies of Britain and Japan and the Elysée Palace, now occupied by the acting President of France, Alain Poher.

The crowds Mr. Nixon rushed into on the north side of the Rue du Faubourg-St. Honoré were uniformly friendly, cheered him and pressed around him. At one point he asked a French policeman holding back the straining throng: "How do you like your job?" The President spoke in English. The policeman stared back uncomprehendingly.

Mr. Nixon told one group, also in English: "Forty years ago I majored in French. After four years I could speak it, I could write it. I read all of the classics. And today I just understand a little."